

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01     PRETOR 00143 01 OF 02 091845Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0140  
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AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 0143

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH, SF  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CARVER/LOW TALKS WITH BOTHA

1. SUMMARY: MEETING WITH SOUTH AFRICANS NOT PRODUCTIVE  
BECAUSE (A) BOTHA DIGRESSED INTO LONG, RAMBLING DISSERTATION  
ON THE PROBLEMS OF STABILITY IN BLACK AFRICA AND (B) IT  
IS CLEAR THAT SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE EXPECTATIONS THAT INTERNAL  
SETTLEMENT TALKS WILL SUCCEED. CARVER/LOW MADE CLEAR  
THAT ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS WILL BE PRESSED FORWARD AND  
UK/US ARE DUBIOUS THAT ANY EFFORT THAT DOES NOT INVOLVE  
ALL THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES WILL SUCCEED IN PRODUCING AN  
INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. BOTHA/FOURIE SAID  
THEY PREFERRED TO WAIT TO SEE HOW SALISBURY TALKS TURN OUT  
AND THEN DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS. IN THE MEANTIME THEY  
EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HMG/USG WOULD DO NOTHING TO FRUSTRATE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02     PRETOR 00143 01 OF 02 091845Z

A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME. END SUMMARY.

2. LORD CARVER ACCOMPANIED BY SUMMERHAYES, WIER, LOW  
AND BOWDLER MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA FOR AN HOUR  
AND THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES THIS MORNING. BOTHA WAS ACCOMPANIED  
BY FOURIE, VAN DALSEN, AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE  
IN SALISBURY, OLIVIER. MEETING TOOK PLACE IN

BOTHA'S OFFICE.

3. LORD CARVER OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY BRIEFING BOTHA ON THE RESULTS OF HIS TRIP TO MAPUTO. H EXPLAINED THAT THE OBJECT OF THE VISIT WAS TO COMPLETE THE ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES CONCERNED IN THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. HE GAVE BOTHA THE ESSENTIALS OF THE CONVERSATIONS AS REPORTED IN PREVIOUS CABLES. CARVER TOLD BOTHA THAT THE MEETINGS WITH MACHEL AND HIS LIEUTENANTS HAD BEEN HIGHLY USEFUL. HE FOUND THEM WELL INFORMED, SINCERE IN THEIR APPROACH AND, ON THE WHOLE, SUPPORTIVE OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN EFFORT. PERHAPS THE BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS TO REMOVE MOZAMBICAN SUSPICIONS REGARDING BRITISH INTENTIONS. CARVER NOTED THAT MACHEL WAS QUITE WORRIED ABOUT THE INTRNAL SETTLEMENT TALKS GOING ON IN SALISBURY, BECAUSE THESE WOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT OR THE FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS. THEREFORE, ANY AGREEMENT REACHED WOULD FORM THE BASIS FOR ANOTHER CONFLICT. MACHEL DID NOT WANT AN ESCALATION OF THE WAR. INDEED, WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR WAS AN END TO THE FIGHTING SO THAT MOZAMBICAN TERRITORY WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE USED AS THE BASE FOR AN EVEN WIDER CONFLICT.

3. CARVER INFORMED BOTHA THAT HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO MACHEL THAT HMG AND USG STOOD FIRM BEHIND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. HE NOTED THAT NO SETTLEMENT WOULD LAST THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PRETOR 00143 01 OF 02 091845Z

WAS NOT INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE, AND THERE WAS NO FORMULA FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABILITY UNLESS ALL THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES WERE IN THE SETTLEMENT. MACHEL HAD ASKED HIM, CARVER INDICATED, HOW HMG PROPOSED TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS PROPOSALS. CARVER RESPONDED THAT THE MAIN OBSTACLE IS GETTING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TALKS. MACHEL GAVE CARVER TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT MUGABLE AND NKOMO WOULD GET ON WITH THE CONVERSATIONS DESIRED BY DAVID OWEN.

4. AT THE CONCLUSION OF CARVER'S PRESENTATION, FOURIE ASKED WHETHER MACHEL'S APPROACH TO THE RHODESIAN QUESTION WAS THE SAME AS FELIMO'S APPROACH TO THE PORTUGUESE OR WHETHER MACHEL ACCEPTED THE REALITIES THAT NONE OF THE PARTIES HAD BEEN ABLE TO WIN A VICTORY AND, THEREFORE, A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WAS ESSENTIAL. CARVER RESPONDED THAT MACHEL ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT THE NEW LEADERSHIP IN RHODESIA WOULD HAVE A STRONG MORAL BASE FLOWING FROM SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE. BOTHA ASKED CARVER WHETHER MACHEL ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT CARVER WOULD RUN THINGS IN RHODESIA DURING THE TRANSITION. CARVER REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. BOTHA NEXT ASKED WHETHER THE

PATRIOTIC FRONT PEOPLE ACCEPTED THIS CONDITION. CARVER INDICATED THAT HE HAD NOT HAD FURTHER TALKS WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SINCE LAST OCTOBER. WHEN HE ASKED THEM THEN THEY SAID THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT PROVIDED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PLAYED A CONTROLLING ROLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION. CARVER NOTED THAT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AS THEN CONCEIVED DID NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY SUCH PART BY ANY NATIONALIST GROUP.

5. BOTHA NEXT ASKED LORD CARVER IF THERE WERE ANYTHING THAT HE DESIRED FROM THE SAG. LORD CARVER EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SUPPORT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. AT THIS POINT, HE ALSO HANDED BOTHA A LETTER FROM OWEN WHICH DESCRIBED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO HMG  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04     PRETOR 00143 01 OF 02 091845Z

REGARDING PLANNED RHODESIAN ATTACKS ON ZAMBIA AND ASKED FOR SAG'S SUPPORT IN DISSUADING SMITH FROM SUCH ACTION.

6. BOTHA NEXT LAUNCHED INTO A RAMBLING FORTY-MINUTE RESPONSE, MUCH OF WHICH HAD LITTLE RELEVANCE TO THE QUESTIONS UNDER DISCUSSION. A DISTILLATION OF WHAT BOTH HAD TO SAY EXPLICITLY AND IMPLICITLY IS THE FOLLOWING:

(A) BLACK AFRICA IS PLAGUED WITH INSTABILITY BECAUSE OF THE PERSONAL AMBITIONS OF ITS LEADERS AND THE LACK OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD PROVIDE AN INSTITUTIONALIZED BASE FOR CONTINITY IN GOVERNMENT.

(B) IN RHODESIA WE SEE THESE FACTORS AT WORK AS THE LEADERS OF THE DIFFERENT GROUPS SHOW LITTLE INTEREST IN CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BUT FOCUS ON WHO EXERCISES POWER DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BECAUSE THIS WILL DETERMINE IN THE END WHO COMES OUT ON TOP. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS ARE TOO COMPLICATED INsofar AS THEY TRY TO SPELL OUT IN GREAT DETAIL WHAT THE TERMS OF SETTLEMENT WOULD BE AND HOW THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WOULD OPERATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01     PRETOR 00143 02 OF 02 091857Z  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 0143

(C) IN THE ABSENCE OF A COMMANDING LEADER IN RHODESIA,  
WHAT SMITH REALLY OUGHT TO DO IS TO PERSUADE ONE OF THE  
NATIONALIST LEADERS TO TAKE CHARGE OF A BLACK MAJORITY  
GOVERNMENT AND THEN PROCEED TO BUILD A SUPPORT BASE AROUND  
HIM. THEY HAD URGED SMITH TO BRING NKOMO INTO THE TALKS.  
THEY HAD ALSO TOLD SMITH, AS OWEN HAD REQUESTED, THAT  
HE SHOULD NOT HOLD OUT FOR A BLOCKING THIRD OF THE  
PARLIAMENT, BUT CONCENTRATE ON MOVING QUICKLY TO A BLACK  
MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WHICH CAN BE SEEN TO HAVE  
POPULAR SUPPORT. IF THIS DOES NOT BRING AN END TO THE  
FIGHTING RIGHT AWAY, THIS IS A FACTOR OF LESSER IMPOR-  
TANCE WHICH CAN BE OVERCOME WITH TIME WHICH HE ESTIMATED  
WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN NINE MONTHS.

(D) THE WORST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN IS THAT NOTHING  
HAPPENS. AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS BETTER THAN NOTHING  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02     PRETOR 00143 02 OF 02 091857Z

BECAUSE NOTHING ONLY LEADS TO GREATER DE-STABILIZATION.

(E) SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT NECESSARILY SUPPORT SMITH  
OVER THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS, BUT BACKS ANYTHING  
THAT CAN BRING ABOUT A MEETING OF THE MINDS FROM  
WHATEVER QUARTER. BOTHA VENTURED THE SALISBURY TALKS  
HAVE A 50 PERCENT CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

7. THROUGHOUT THIS PRESENTATION BY BOTHA, FOURIE AND

OLIVIER LOOKED PARTICULARLY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HIS RAMBLING, AND FREQUENTLY IRRELEVANT COMMENTS. FOURIE TRIED TO BRING THE DISCUSSION BACK INTO FOCUS BY DESCRIBING THE REALITY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION SURROUNDING THE TWO INITIATIVES IN BEING; I.E., THE SALISBURY INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TALKS AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. HE SAID THAT THE TALKS HAD ALREADY PROVED VALUABLE IN BRINGING SMITH CLOSER TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND ENCOURAGING THE PF TO AGREE TO TALKS WITH US. THE FINAL OUTCOME, HE NOTED, MIGHT WELL BE A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE SMITH PLAN AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS.

8. AT THIS POINT, BOTH CARVER AND LOW STRESSED THE FACT THAT THE ONLY WAY TO BRING ABOUT A LASTING SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA IS TO INVOLVE ALL THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES IN THE EVENTUAL SOLUTION. CARVER NOTED THAT HMG HAD NOT DISMISSED THE SALISBURY TALKS BUT WANTED TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT, IN ITS JUDGEMENT, THESE TALKS WOULD NOT SUCCEED UNLESS ALL THE LEADERS WERE BROUGHT IN. LOW NOTED THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT ALONG PARALLEL PATHS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL AREA BUT AGREEMENT ON A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD PRESENTS GREATER PROBLEMS. HE CAUTIONED THAT THE TWO APPROACHES

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PRETOR 00143 02 OF 02 091857Z

COULD WORK AGAINST EACH OTHER. IF THE SALISBURY TALKS GO TOO FAR, HE SAID, IT COULD UNDERMINE WHAT IS BEING DONE THROUGH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN APPROACH. WE HAVE GONE A LONG WAY TOWARD A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT SINCE LAST MAY, LOW NOTED, AND WE SHOULD NOT RISK CANCELLING WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH AN INTERNAL EFFORT THAT RUNS THE RISK OF STIMULATING MORE EXTREME ACTION ON THE PART OF THE PF. FOURIE RESPONDED TO THIS BY SAYING THAT WE MUST WAIT TO SEE HOW THE SALISBURY TALKS COME OUT AND THEN WE CAN DECIDE HOW TO PROCEED IN BRINGING ABOUT AGREEMENT AMONG ALL THE ELEMENTS. BOTHA ENDED UP BY SAYING "LET'S LET THE RIVER RUN A WHILE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS." HE AGAIN THANKED LORD CARVER FOR THE OWEN MESSAGE AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD REPLY, BUT GAVE NO INDICATION WHAT THE RESPONSE WOULD BE.

9. COMMENT: THE SOUTH AFRICANS TOOK THE OPEN POSITION THAT ALL EFFORTS AT A RHODESIA SOLUTION SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO TRY THEIR HAND. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE HAD ITS OPPORTUNITY; NOW SMITH SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO TRY HIS LUCK. WHILE OUTWARDLY SYMPATHETIC TO BOTH INITIATIVES, BOTHA AND FOURIE NEVERTHELESS GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SMITH'S EFFORT IS MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED. FROM THEIR STANDPOINT, THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF ESTABLISHING

A BLACK LEADERSHIP UNDER BLACK MAJORITY RULE WHICH, IF NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ALL FACTIONS, COULD IN TIME LEAD TO AN EROSION OF THE GUERRILLA EFFORT AND VENTUALLY WIN ACCEPTANC INTERNATIONALLY. IN THIS LINE OF REASONING THE SAG IS BEING CONSISTENT WITH WHAT IT HAS DONE WITH THE TRANSKEI AND BOPHUTHATSWANA AND IS PREPARED TO DO WITH TURNHALLE IN NAMIBIA. THE FALLACY OF THEIR REASONING IS THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT MAY NOT LEAD TO A GRADUAL DEESCALATION IN THE FIGHTING AND WIN TIME FOR EVENTUAL INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE. IT COULD HAVE JUST THE OPPOSIT EFFECT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04     PRETOR 00143 02 OF 02 091857Z

10. AT THIS STAGE WE CANNOT LOOK TO THE SAG TO SERVE AS A BRAKE ON AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT FROM THEIR PRESENTATION TODAY WAS ANY REFERENCE TO DESIREABILITY OF AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT. IF THE SALISBURY TALKS SUCCEED, THEY WILL SUPPORT THEM AS A STEP TOWARD WHAT THE WORLD SAYS IT WANTS: I.E., BLACK MAJORITY RULE. IF THEY DON'T SUCCEED, THE SAG WILL LOOK AROUND FOR WHAT OTHER INITIATIVES MAY BE AVAILABLE. THERE IS NOTHING TO INDICATE ANY SHIFT FROM THE BASIC POSITION THAT THEY WILL GUARANTEE SMITH'S COMPLIANCE WITH WHAT HE AGREES TOO, BUT THEY WILL NOT PRESSURE HIM OPENLY TO DO WHAT HE IS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT.

11. BOTHA'S LONG, RAMBLING RESPONSE PREVENTED US FROM ENTERING INTO A FULLER DISCUSSION OF MACHEL'S REACTION AND THE IMPLICATION OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT APPROACH. WE ARE DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, THAT MORE SUBSTANTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES WOULD HAVE ALTERED THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION.BOWDLER

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